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[Dear Permission to be Powerful Reader, I thought I had learned my lesson...](#)



Dear Permission to be Powerful Reader,

I thought I had learned my lesson.

More than a decade ago, I walked away from a woman who lied, cheated, and left me doubting my own reality. I wrote out every reason why I would

never go through that again—why I would never let anyone else erode my self-respect like that.

And yet... I did.

Not just once. Again and again.

The faces changed, the details shifted, but the story stayed the same. Every time, I convinced myself *this one was different*. Every time, I found myself trapped in another cycle of **emotional starvation, neglect, and mind games**.

It took me years to see the truth: **I wasn't choosing these women. I was recreating my childhood.**

We don't repeat toxic relationships by accident. We do it because something deep inside us is **trying to resolve unfinished business**. The emotional wounds we suffered as children—the love we chased but never fully received—become **the blueprint for what we pursue as adults**.

I relentlessly pursued emotionally unavailable women because, on some level, I believed if I could **just make one of them love me**, I could finally rewrite the past.

Of course, it never worked.

Because **healing doesn't come from repeating the pattern**. It comes from **breaking it**.

And breaking it? That's the hardest thing I've ever done.

The Pattern: How I Kept Ending Up Here

I used to think I was just “unlucky” in love. That I just happened to attract difficult women. That maybe I was too soft, too sensitive, or too willing to see the best in people.

What I didn't realize was that my "bad luck" wasn't luck at all—it was **a script**.

I was replaying the exact same dynamics I had learned as a kid:

- **Love meant chasing.** I had to earn it, prove myself, be "good enough" to receive it.
- **Love meant inconsistency.** One day, I'd feel cherished. The next, ignored.
- **Love meant sacrifice.** The more I gave up my needs, the more "worthy" I felt.
- **Love meant pain.** If I wasn't suffering, it didn't feel real.

I didn't just tolerate emotionally unavailable women—I **sought them out**. I was drawn to them in ways I didn't fully understand. **Their coldness, their detachment, their mixed signals—these things felt familiar.**

Because they were.

My nervous system was wired to **crave** the kind of love I grew up with: unpredictable, distant, conditional. If a woman showed up ready to love me fully, without resistance? I'd push her away. I'd find her boring. I'd think, *Something's off. It's too easy.*

I wasn't looking for love. **I was looking for resolution.**

But **you can't fix the past by repeating it.**

The Illusion of Change

Every toxic relationship starts the same way: **with a lie.**

Not her lie—**mine.**

The lie I told myself that *this one* was different. That *this time* I'd finally found someone who could love me the way I wanted to be loved.

Eriche was the biggest illusion of them all.

On the surface, she seemed like an **upgrade** from past relationships. More serious. More ambitious. More put-together. But underneath? She was **even more oppressive**.

The same dynamics I had run from before—manipulation, emotional starvation, power games—were all still there, just wrapped in a different package. **A new mask on the same demon.**

But I couldn't see it at first.

Because when you're still caught in the cycle, **you mistake familiarity for love.**

So I stayed. Longer than I should have. I tolerated things that should have been deal-breakers. I convinced myself that if I just **tried harder**, loved better, communicated more—**she'd change.**

But she didn't.

Because **that's not how this works.**

The Realization: It Wasn't About Them—It Was About Me

Leaving wasn't the hardest part.

The hardest part was realizing that **I was the common denominator.**

That's the brutal truth no one wants to face. It's easier to blame them. To call them narcissists, manipulators, users. And sure, maybe they were. But **why did I keep choosing them?**

The answer was painful:

Because I didn't believe I deserved better.

Not consciously, of course. But deep down, **I had accepted the lie that love was something I had to suffer for.** That I had to **earn.** That I had to **chase.**

I had spent my whole life trying to prove my worth to people who could never fully love me.

Because that's what I learned as a child.

That's when I realized: **The real work wasn't leaving toxic relationships. The real work was changing what I believed I deserved.**

Breaking the Cycle

So how do you break a pattern that's been running your entire life?

Here's what I learned:

1. You have to grieve the past.

You can't move forward until you **accept that the love you wanted will never come from the people who failed to give it to you.** No amount of replaying the past will fix it.

2. You have to retrain your nervous system.

If chaos feels like home, **healthy love will feel boring at first.** Learn to sit with that discomfort.

3. You have to build boundaries with yourself.

Not just with others—**with yourself.** No more excusing bad behavior. No more chasing people who don't choose you.

4. You have to practice receiving love.

The hardest thing in the world for people like us isn't giving love—it's receiving it. **Let yourself be loved without earning it.** That's the real test.

Never Again: What I Know Now

I look back at my past relationships now, and I see them for what they were: **lessons I had to learn the hard way.**

I don't regret them.
I don't wish they never happened.
Because **they led me here.**

But there are things I will never tolerate again:

- Anyone who makes me **beg** for love.
- Anyone who **weaponizes affection** and gives it conditionally.
- Anyone who confuses **power struggles for passion.**
- Anyone who tries to make me **prove my worth** instead of recognizing it.

I used to think breaking the cycle meant just “finding the right person.”

I was wrong.

Breaking the cycle means becoming the person who would never tolerate it again.

And that's exactly who I've become.

[Self-Love University](#) isn't about blaming your past.
It's about finally understanding it—so you stop repeating it.

If you're tired of chasing love that feels like punishment...
If you're ready to stop confusing “familiar” with “safe”...
This is where the pattern ends.

Not by finding the right person.
By becoming the one who would never settle again.
That's where the healing starts.

Self-Love University isn't about fixing you.

It's about helping you see the patterns you've been stuck in—so you can finally break them.

No blame. No shame. Just clarity.

If you're done repeating old stories, this is where the new one begins.

[Enrollment's open.](#) Only requirement?

The willingness to stop settling.

Until next time,

Anton

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist.



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